

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 74-84 remain in this application.

1. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §102(e)

Claims 74-80 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Merkel '198 (U.S. Patent 6,864,198 B2).

Respectfully, the 35 USC 102(e) rejection is overcome. Applicant's attorney submits herewith an affidavit by one of the inventors under 37 C.F.R. 1.132. It is believed that this affidavit overcomes the 102(e) rejection.

Accordingly, the 102(e) rejection should be withdrawn.

2. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant's thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. Claims 81-84 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant's have rewritten claims 81-84 as independent claims. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 81-84, are allowable.

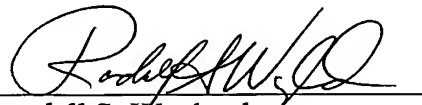
3. Conclusion

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, Applicants believe the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicants believe that a one month extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should Applicants be in error, Applicants respectfully request that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Randall S. Wayland at 607-974-0463.

Respectfully submitted,



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